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NAVAL BATTLE IN THE NORTH SEA. HEAVY BRITISH AND GERMAN LOSSES.

A battle between British and German naval forces took place on Wednesday, May 31, in the North Sea, off the coast of Jutland.

It lasted about 12 hours, from the late afternoon of Wednesday until after daybreak on Thursday.

Heavy losses were suffered by both sides.

The British ships destroyed comprised three battle cruisers, three armoured cruisers, and eight destroyers. The Germans have admitted the loss of two battleships (one a Dreadnought), three cruisers, and "some" destroyers.

The British Admiral estimated the German losses as follows:—One Dreadnought battleship, one battleship, one battle cruiser, one light cruiser, six destroyers, and one submarine, in addition to two battle cruisers and two light cruisers disabled.

It appears that the main German fleet was proceeding in a north-westerly direction when it was met by the British battle-cruiser squadron under Admiral Sir David Beatty. The British immediately gave battle, and sought to keep the Germans engaged until British battleships under Admiral Sir John Jellicoe could arrive. When eventually the latter appeared on the scene the Germans refused a serious engagement with the British battleships, and fled to the shelter of their ports.

The late First Lord of the Admiralty, Colonel Winston Churchill, has pointed out that there is no great difference in the losses suffered by each side; that Britain is still in unquestioned control of the sea; and that the battle has shown that Germany has no "surprises" in either armament or ships. This statement has been amplified by an official Admiralty message.

The British death roll is reported to be very heavy. Almost all the officers on five of the six big ships destroyed were lost.

OFFICIAL REPORTS.

STATEMENTS BY THE BRITISH ADMIRALTY.

LONDON, June 3.

A naval engagement occurred off the coast of Jutland on Wednesday afternoon.

The British ships on which the brunt of the fighting fell were the battle-cruiser fleet, some cruisers, and light cruisers, supported by four fast battleships. The losses among these were heavy.

The German battle fleet, aided by low visibility, avoided prolonged action with our main forces. Soon after this appeared on the scene the enemy returned to port, though not before receiving severe damage from our battleships.

The enemy sunk the battle cruisers Queen Mary, Indefatigable, and Invincible, the cruisers Defence and Black Prince, and disabled the cruiser Warrior, which was towed for sometime and subsequently abandoned by her crew.

It is also known that we lost the destroyers Tipperary, Turbulent, Fortune, Sparrowhawk, and Ardent. Six others have not been accounted for. No British battleships or light cruisers were sunk.

The German losses were serious—at least one battle cruiser was destroyed and one severely damaged. One battleship is reported to have been sunk by our destroyers. During a night attack two light cruisers were disabled, and probably sunk. The exact number of enemy destroyers disposed of during the action cannot be ascertained with any certainty, but it must have been large.

LATER REPORT FROM SIR JOHN JELICOE.

The Admiralty, at 3 a.m., announced that the following report had been received from Admiral Sir John Jellicoe:—

It is now possible to form a clearer estimate of the losses and damage sustained by the enemy fleet. We lost eight destroyers.

The Germans lost a Dreadnought battleship of the Kaiser class, which was blown up by destroyers.

It is believed another Dreadnought of the Kaiser class was sunk by gunfire.

Of three battle cruisers engaged, including the Lutnow and Derfflinger, one was blown up. Another was disabled and had to stop. A third was seriously damaged.

A German light cruiser and six destroyers were sunk. At least two light cruisers were disabled. A German submarine was rammed and sunk.

Repeated hits were observed on three other German battleships engaged.

The Admiralty officially denies the German statement that the battleship Warship and the destroyer Arcturion were lost. The list of eight British destroyers lost has been completed by the addition of the names of the Nomad, Nestor, and Shark.

BRITISH BATTLESHIPS BACK AGAIN AT SEA.

The British Admiralty has informed the American Associated Press that the whole of the units of the British battle fleet which were recently engaged, except the Marlborough, were cooled and refitted for service at sea within a few hours of their return to harbour.

The same agency learns from the Admiralty that the latest reports of Sir John Jellicoe and Sir David Beatty caused a feeling of elation. They may be summarised as follows:—We went out with enemy waters seeking a fight. Our fleet engaged the entire German battle fleet and forced it to return to harbour and abandon any enterprise it may have contemplated.

GERMAN ACCOUNT OF BATTLE.

Germany issued from Berlin today the following official account of the North Sea battle:—

During an enterprise directed towards the north, our High Sea Fleet on Wednesday met a considerably superior main portion of the British battle fleet during the course of the afternoon, between the Skagerrack and Horn Reef. A number of severe, and, for us, successful engagements developed, which were continued all night.

As far as is at present can be ascertained we destroyed the great battle-ship Westfalen, the battle cruisers Queen Mary and Indefatigable, two armoured cruisers of the Achilles class, one small cruiser, and new destroyer leaders named Turbulent, Nestor, and Arcturion.

According to trustworthy evidence a great number of British battleships suffered heavy damage from our vessels' artillery, and the attacks of our torpedo-boats during the day battle, and during the night.

Statements of prisoners confirm, among other enemy losses, that our torpedo hit the great battleship Marlborough.

Our vessels picked up portion of the crews of the sunken British vessels, including two sole survivors of the Indefatigable.

On our side during the day battle the enemy's artillery sank the small cruiser Wiesbaden, and during the night the Pommern was torpedoed. Nothing is yet known of the fate of the Frauenlob, and some torpedo boats, which have not returned.

The High Sea Fleet returned to our harbours during the course of Friday.

GERMANY ADMITS LOSS OF TWO MORE SHIPS.

LONDON, June 4.

The German Admiralty admits the loss of the Dreadnought battleship Westfalen, according to a wireless message from Berlin.

An official German message, issued from Berlin, says:—

We were compelled to blow up the Elbing, which had been heavily damaged in a collision with another German warship.

LATEST OFFICIAL FACTS.

MIST HELPED ENEMY.

OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF THE BATTLE.

The latest facts are published by courtesy of the Admiralty:—

Admirals Jellicoe's and Beatty's reports are far from complete, but they put an utterly different complexion on the German account and remove the cheerless impression caused by the first British communiqué.

The reason for this dismal announcement was that until Admiral Jellicoe reached port on Friday afternoon all that was known was that a portion of the British fleet met the whole German fleet and drove it back to port. Even then only the barest particulars were available, and they were published in the evening, throwing a gloom over England unequalled in the memory of living men. The Admiralty hastened to publish the more cheering news contained in the second communiqué the moment it was received.

The outstanding facts are:—

- (1) There were no surprises.
- (2) The mythical German 17-inch guns failed to materialise.
- (3) The loss of life was very heavy.
- (4) Zeppelins were conspicuous by their absence.
- (5) Gunners caused greater material loss than torpedoes.
- (6) The engagement was fought at a distance of between 10,000 and 12,000 yards.

(7) The battle occurred in four phases, beginning with evenly-matched battle cruisers, then came the fight of light cruisers, ending with the sudden appearance of the German battleships, followed by the approach of British battleships, and the hasty retreat of the Germans. Finally came the German destroyer attack. The fighting between the battle cruisers began at 3 on Wednesday afternoon. The battleships finished at 9 in the evening. The destroyer attack was continued later.

It was asked whether the British were looking for a fight or whether the meeting was accidental. The Admiralty replied that whenever the fleet was out it was always looking for fight, adding, "Whatever the German enterprise was it did not come off. We drove back the whole of them to port. We waited on the spot and searched everywhere until, Thursday, when there were no signs of them, so we returned home leisurely. We only wish they would emerge to-morrow under similar conditions."

Admiral Jellicoe sent the following message to the Admiralty:—"My one regret is that the misty weather on Wednesday saved the enemy far more serious punishment."

It is semi-officially stated that there is some mystery about the Pommern. It was understood that the latter was torpedoed in the Gulf of Riga on July 2, 1915. Experts believe that the Pommern sunk on Wednesday is a new Dreadnought christened with the old name. Otherwise it is believed that the Germans, wishing to gloss over the loss of a vessel of the Kaiser class, introduced the name Pommern, being that of a vessel of smaller tonnage.

The Admiralty has informed neutral journalists that they shall have an early opportunity of seeing the Warspite, Marlborough, and Acasta safe in port.

Admiral Beatty, by brilliant manoeuvring, got between the Germans and their base. That was the time when the mist favoured the Germans, for out of the mist suddenly appeared German battleships, compelling Admiral Beatty to turn off. The range of vision was no more than five miles.

Admiralty officials emphasise that Admiral Beatty put up a magnificent fight against tremendous odds. Here the Queen Mary and Indefatigable received their death wounds, but not before making the Germans pay dearly for their success.

Admiral Beatty says:—"Rear-Admiral Hood led his division into action with the most inspiring gallantry."

While the fighting was hottest Jellicoe with his buildings arrived, and a change came over the scene. The Germans scurried home, with Jellicoe in hot pursuit.

Eleven British battleships participated in the actual fighting. Four arrived early and then seven, and though others were present the latter did not fire a single shot. All the battleships returned safely.

A torpedo struck the Marlborough, but she got home safely. The Warspite was knocked about by gunfire. It is stated that the Queen Mary, Indefatigable, and Indefatigable were blown up, but not torpedoed.

Regarding the German battle cruisers mentioned as disabled and stopping, it is explained that it was the duty of the British to continue the chase. They hoped to sink or cripple them on their return. The weather was misty, however, and at 9 in the evening our ships on returning found no trace of them. It is presumed that they sank.

When the main fight was over came the destroyer fight. In this the Germans were absolutely unsuccessful, and sustained considerable damage. Only one Zeppelin appeared, but did not stay long, our gunfire quickly impeding it. The rumour that a Zeppelin sank the Queen Mary is officially described as absurd. Aeroplanes were used, but to what extent or with what success is unknown.

American journalists asked the Admiralty what effect the action would have on the strength of the navy, and the reply given was:—"Beyond slightly affecting the strength of our battle cruisers, absolutely none. We expect to lose ships. That is why we build them. Of course the heavy loss of life is deplored, but in modern naval warfare that is inevitable. There is no time to pick up men."

Finally the Americans said:—"The Germans paid a tribute to British bravery in the fight, what do you say of them?" The Admiralty official replied:—"We have no fault to find with the Germans. We only wish they would come out again, and that soon."

A shell killed Lord French's nephew, the Reverend Mr. Lyndall, chaplain on H.M.S. Lion. He was to have been married on Monday.

BRITISH AND GERMAN LOSSES.

BRITISH.

The following are the casualties suffered by the fleets:—

BATTLE CRUISERS.

Queen Mary, 27,000 tons.

Indefatigable, 18,750 tons.

Invincible, 17,250 tons.

ARMOURD CRUISERS.

Defence, 14,600 tons.

Black Prince, 13,550 tons.

The Warrior, 13,550 tons disabled.

(She was taken in tow for some time, but finally abandoned.)

DESTROYERS.

Tipperary.

Turbulent.

Fortune.

Sparrowhawk.

Ardent.

Nomad.

Nestor.

Shark.

GERMAN.

The enemy's losses are serious, and are believed to include:—

1 Dreadnought battleship of the Kaiser class, blown up.

1 of the same class, sunk by gunfire.

1 Battle cruiser blown up.

2 Battle cruisers disabled.

1 Light cruiser sunk.

2 Light cruisers disabled.

6 Destroyers sunk.

1 Submarine sunk.

German communiques admit the following losses:—

Westfalen, Dreadnought battleship, 18,600 tons.

Pommern, battleship, 13,040 tons.

Elbing, cruiser.

Wiesbaden, small cruiser.

Frauenlob, small cruiser, 2657 tons.

Some destroyers.

ACCOUNTS OF BATTLE.

"ON GIGANTIC SCALE."

GERMAN PLANS FRUSTRATED.

BATTLE-CRUISERS TOO CLOSE IN.

LONDON, June 3.

The "Star" states that the brief story of the battle, as told at a British naval port, shows that Admiral Sir David Beatty's battle-cruisers on Wednesday afternoon sighted the German battle fleet, with cruisers and lighter vessels, off the Dogger Bank, and presumably making for the English coast. Sir David Beatty engaged the enemy.

Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, with the British battle fleet, meanwhile set out under cover of a fog, and steamed down the Norwegian coast. Sir David Beatty's squadron was in great danger, the Germans being discovered in great strength. Sir John Jellicoe's ships appeared on the scene, and a battle on a gigantic scale ensued.

The estimates of the German losses are varying and indefinite, but all are high.

Sir David Beatty is safe, and is believed to be unharmed.

The latest telegrams show that fighting commenced at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, reached its maximum between 6 and 8 p.m., and ceased at 10 p.m. The battle apparently commenced eight miles south-west of Stavanger (on the south-west coast of Norway), and it moved in a southerly direction.

Britain was quickly aflame with the

ly big ships, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, in misty weather. Suddenly a second great fleet appeared from the north-east, obviously attempting to cut off the German retreat. The second fleet was composed of many warships, but they were not of the same heavy tonnage as the Germans. Later, the British were reinforced, and the Germans retreated.

DANISH REPORTS.

The captain of the Danish steamer Flod narvise that 120 miles west of Helsingør he was stopped by a German destroyer. Four British destroyers came up and opened fire on the destroyer. A large German fleet then approached at full speed. The British destroyers immediately fled. The Danish destroyers without hitting them. The Flod counted five large modern German Dreadnoughts, eight cruisers, and 20 destroyers.

The Danish steamer Naesborg witnessed the battle 80 miles off Helsingør. Forty German ships, ranging from battleships to torpedo-boats, were travelling at full speed, hidden by smoke. The cannonade began at 2.30 p.m. The German fleet was two miles distant firing southerly. The British warships were invisible, but British shells were falling steadily, and increasing in rapidity among the Germans, who were firing all their guns as rapidly as possible. The cannonade was audible until late in the evening.

Esbjerg fishermen declare they saw 90 ships steaming north on Wednesday evening, and a much greater number on Thursday. There was a violent cannonade at 2 o'clock on Thursday morning, which lit up the sky. The battle raged for hours. The British and German ships were steaming southward. The fishermen saw a cruiser struck and sunk, and afterwards found three empty lifeboats. The Germans disappeared in the direction of Helsingør, and the British departed westward.

There have been distressing scenes in the ships were commotioned at Ports mouth, to which port about 3000 of the men aboard belonged.

Rear-Admiral the Hon. Horace Hood, C.B., D.S.O., M.V.O., who had a distinguished career, was aboard the Invincible.

A Danish steamer, the Vidar, has landed at Hull seven blue-jackets who were picked

up in the North Sea on Thursday. They believe themselves to be the only survivors of the destroyer Shark, which acted as a decoy-boat in the naval engagement, and was torpedoed. The men state that the Shark's steering gear was damaged, and she drifted in a helpless condition. The vessel was swept by gunfire until only one man remained. This the commander and two men worked until the last. The commander's leg was blown off, and he went down with the ship.

The Vidar passed the wreck of a German warship, of which only the bow was showing above the water.

It is rumoured in responsible circles in the city that eight German warships took refuge in Danish territorial waters; and that the twenty-four hours in which they were allowed to leave expired at noon today.

Though the only ships mentioned as taking part in the battle are casualties, reports from Edinburgh favour the belief that the Australia and New Zealand participated in the fighting.

AMSTERDAM, June 3.

A German semi-official report received through Amsterdam says that Vice-Admiral Scheer commanded the German fleet, which consisted of the High Sea Fleet, with Dreadnoughts, other ships of the line, battle-cruisers, all light units, and submarine flotillas. Vice-Admiral Hipper commanded the reconnaissance forces, which first gave battle to the British battle-cruisers and light cruisers.

Subsequently the whole of the fleets on both sides participated in the day battle, in which the enemy lost the Warspite, Queen Mary, one armoured cruiser, and several destroyers.

The remainder of the enemy losses were sustained during the night, and were due to severe torpedo attacks and cruiser fighting. The German leading vessels also destroyed six modern destroyers.

All reports from German sources agree in acknowledging the enemy's heavy during the almost continuous battle of

news of the battle. The last editions of the evening papers had gone to press, but the special editions were quickly on the streets.

The first impression created was something approaching dismay, the Admiralty, with its customary candour, setting out every casualty, and under-estimating the enemy's loss. A better impression was caused when Admiral Sir John Jellicoe's report was issued, suggesting that if the Germans had lost two Dreadnought battleships and a battle-cruiser to our three battle-cruisers, the balance of the advantage lay with Britain.

WHAT FISHERMEN SAW.

Danish fishermen, who were eyewitnesses of the battle, narrate that a few small British ships were first seen being pursued by the German Fleet. The Britishers suddenly turned westward, and shortly after the British Dreadnought cruisers appeared from the west and north, and began attacking the Germans, who were reinforced by a large number of battleships from the eastward.

A violent battle ensued. Six Zeppelins assisted the Germans. They included L24, which was hit several times in the forward part. Many of the crew were wounded, but they managed to reach Schleswig by jetting along all their supplies.

During the battle, fishermen saw several large warships sink, but it was impossible to say whether they were British or German.

The Germans finally withdrew, the British pursuing them. Then several British battleships appeared from the west, and the German fleet divided into two parts and escaped. The German submarines throwing out many mines. Fishermen from Esbjerg witnessed a large cruiser of unknown nationality strike a mine fifty miles north-west of Helsingør (on the west coast of Jutland), and only a few men were saved.

WHY CRUISERS WERE SUNK.

The "Morning Post" naval expert points out that the weather was thick, and the range of vision was not more than six miles. Therefore, the action was fought at short range, and both main and secondary armaments were used.

As the German battleships mount the most powerful secondary armaments, the British were exposed to a tremendous fire. The three British battle-cruisers which were sunk were not designed for close fighting in line of battle, but for fighting at a high speed and long range, when they were extraordinarily successful at the Falkland Islands. Despite these losses, the British Fleet remained at sea, and is victorious.

"THE GERMANS RETIRED."

The skipper of a Dutch trawler saw a war fleet of fifty German vessels, most

up in the North Sea on Thursday. They believe themselves to be the only survivors of the destroyer Shark, which acted as a decoy-boat in the naval engagement, and was torpedoed. The men state that the Shark's steering gear was damaged, and she drifted in a helpless condition. The vessel was swept by gunfire until only one man remained. This the commander and two men worked until the last. The commander's leg was blown off, and he went down with the ship.

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HEAVY DEATH-ROLL.

THE TOLL OF OFFICERS.

VERY FEW REPORTED SAVED.

LONDON, June 3.

Fears of a terrible death-roll are confirmed.

The Admiralty's first list of casualties among officers shows that all the Queen Mary's officers were lost except four midshipmen. All the Invincible's officers were lost except the commander, Tristram Dann reuter, and one lieutenant. All the officers on the Indefatigable, Defence, and Black Prince were lost. All the officers on the Warrior were saved except one.

Admiral Sir Percy Scott's eldest son John, who was a midshipman, went down with the Defence.

There have been distressing scenes in the ships were commotioned at Ports mouth, to which port about 3000 of the men aboard belonged.

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